

Jack Anderson's
ARTICLE APPEARED WASHINGTON LETTER.
ON PAGE 1 January

EXCERPTED

WHO WILL WIN THE POWER STRUGGLE?

The ideologues, for all their agitations and fulminations, were pushed into a tight corner. The departure of William

Clark from the White House and the pending move of Edwin Meese III to the Justice Department reduced the conservative voice to a whisper and left their nemesis, James Baker, virtually unopposed.

In quiet desperation, they tried to bring Clark back from the Interior Department to replace Baker. Clark resigned instead, vowing he would return to California. The hardliners also tried to install Max Hugel, former No. 2 man at the CIA, on the White House staff. "Over my dead body," said Baker, who blocked the appointment.

But Baker had a weak point: He hankered for the prestige and perquisites of a Cabinet post. He wanted to become Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense or CIA director. But these offices were already filled, and the occupants didn't intend to leave.

Baker was offered the U.N. ambassadorship, which was available, but he turned it down. Then the ideologues executed a master stratagem. They persuaded Donald Regan to vacate the prestigious post of Secretary of the Treasury in exchange for Baker's job. The temptation apparently was more than Baker could resist.